

Week 2: The Dark Ages

Lecture 2, The Origins of the Greek World, 3000-1100, Key Words

Minos
Linear A
Minoans
Pithoi
Thalassocracy
Mycenaeans
Pylos
Shaft and Beehive Graves
Linear B
Michael Ventris
Wanax
Lawagetas
Temenos
Pasireu
Hittites
Atreus and Thyestes
Seven against Thebes
Tiryns
Thera
Dorian Invasion
Codrus
Heraclidae
Megaron
Age of Heroes
Epic Tradition

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Knossos, Palace, West Magazine: Pithoi

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Mycenae: daggers from Shaft Grave

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Mycenae: Grave Circle A: Shaft Grave V:

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Mask of Agamemnon; Gold, 16th century

Chronological Table for Lecture 2

Cretan history – Minoan periods

- 7000-3500** Neolithic period
3500-1100 The Bronze Age
3500-1900 Prepalatial period
2600-1450 Minoan Civilization of Crete
2000 First palaces in Crete
1900-1700 Protopalatial (period of the Old Palaces)
1750-1400 Linear A
1700-1450 Neopalatial (the period of the New Palaces) **Knossos, fresco from palace: priest-king**
1647-1628 Volcano-island Thera destroyed in an eruption; severe blow to Minoan civilization
1450-1100 Postpalatial (except Final Palace period at Knossos)
1375 Knossos destroyed
1100-1000 The Subminoan period

Mainland Greek history

- 6500-3000** Neolithic Period; permanent farming villages; domestication of plants and animals; pottery
3000-2100 Early Bronze Age; social ranking emerges; villages and districts ruled by hereditary chiefs
2500 Widespread use of bronze and other metals in the Aegean
2100-1600 Middle Bronze Age
2100-1900 Lerna and other sites destroyed; incursions of Indo-European speakers (arrival of first Greeks) into mainland Greece
1900 Mainland contacts with Crete and the Near East
1600-1100 Late Bronze Age/Mycenaean Age
1450-1200 Linear B
1450 Mycenaean takeover of Crete; Tholos tombs
1450-1200 Height of Mycenaean power and prosperity in Greece (new palaces in Greece)
1250 Trojan War
1200 Invaders loot and burn the palace centers
1200-1100 Destruction of Mycenaean World; palace-system collapses; cultural decline
1200 Fall of Pylos
1150 Fall of Mycenae
1100-750 Dark Age; loss of writing
800 Greeks develop an alphabet

Mycenae Gold and Silver: vessels: decorated golden cup

Lecture 3, **The Dark Ages and the World of Homer, 1000-750**, Key Words

Schliemann
Milman Parry
Polis
Wanaktes
Achilles
Hector
Nausicaa
Odysseus
Priam
Thersites
Basileis
Basileutatos
Council (Boule)
Assembly (Agora)

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Classical Aison, 450-425, Pyxis-lid; Odysseus, Nausicaa

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**Achilles: red figure amphora
Achilles painter 445-440 BC**

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**Blinding of Polyphemos by Odysseus and companions, from Etruria,
510-490 BC**

The Homeric World and the Bronze Age

BE ABLE TO IDENTIFY:

Knossos, Pylos, Mycenae, Linear A, Linear B, *wanax*, *basileus* (*pasireu*), *gerousia*, *lawagetes*, *demos*

CONSIDER:

1. What is the value of the Homeric epics as historical sources? For what period(s) are they sources? When were they composed? Over how long a period were they composed? Is there anything about the method of composition (oral formulaic poetry) that would encourage us to expect that they could preserve material significantly earlier than their date of composition?
2. What kinds of evidence do we possess about the Trojan War? What were Homer's sources about the Trojan War and the Mycenaean period and how reliable might they have been? Who has better evidence about this period, Homer or we?
3. Analyze the social and political institutions described by Homer. What were the relative powers of the Homeric king, nobility, people? What power is retained by women?
4. Are the institutions described by Homer those of his day or of the late Mycenaean period? Consider the evidence presented by the Linear B tablets.
5. What is the relationship between people and the gods in Homer? Between the individual and the community? Between men and women? What are the values of this community?

Knossos, Palace: Queen's Megaron: view into court

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Mycenae: Grave Circle A: view